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August 2015 Volume XVI, Issue VIII

# focus

## First Presbyterian

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# f f o c u s

## First Presbyterian

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Church Staff

### Reflections

#### Seeking to be In Christ Together

Reasonable people with good intentions can still disagree over matters of substance. The question is not whether there is agreement; the issue is the way one conducts oneself in the midst of disagreement. Personal attacks rather than focusing upon issues are signs of immaturity in the faith and a lack of self-discipline. Everyone can fall victim to this type of behavior from time to time. It is the job of the rest of the people of God to minimize the damage of these lapses of faithfulness. Also, we affirm that Christ Jesus taught (Matthew 18:15-17) that when there is a disagreement or personal matter you go to the person with whom you have the issue, and seek to settle it together. If we are in Christ, we will seek to be people who grow through our disagreements, rather than people who attack or seek to hurt others.

This is counter to society, particularly during election season. Increasingly we see people talking at one another, not listening to or attending to one another. We become pulled into dramas that involve gossip, personal attacks, and innuendo, rather than seeking to be faithful to God. Gossip is particularly destructive – to the individuals sharing the gossip and to surrounding relationships. The Apostle Paul repeatedly identified gossip and similar behaviors as being sinful and abhorrent to God (see

Romans 1:28-32 as an example). And yet we live in a time when entire genres of entertainment from reality television to “news” broadcasts make this type of behavior their stock in trade.

So how do we respond? The first and probably most important is to choose to not participate in the destructive behaviors. There are risks of course. If we don't participate we risk becoming an “outsider.” This is one of the most powerful motivating factors to gossip and forming hostile dissensions is that it gives a false sense of “togetherness.” In middle school many of us experienced the sense that we want to fit in with a crowd and there is no more powerful sense of being part of the “in crowd” than having the opportunity to exclude someone else. Throughout the history of Christianity this has been the case and it continues to be the challenge we face today.

What it means is that the greatest test and trials that we face as Christians comes down to how we conduct ourselves when we encounter conflict. Do we react with hostility, retaliate, gossip, and seek to punish? Do we launch into personal attacks, and belittle those who we are in disagreement? Or do we choose to be respectful, to listen thoughtfully, to seek areas of common ground, and to prayerfully find ways to work together? Most importantly, do we spend more time in prayer and seeking God's peace than we spend complaining?

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Whenever there is disagreement there is an opportunity to show the testimony of the love of Christ. As we pass through times of disagreement and conflict there are opportunities to grow in wisdom, love, and compassion. And as Christ's body, when we come together and seek to accomplish the will and the work of Jesus as one, we offer a testimony to God about the true meaning of being Christian. So in that spirit we will continue to love God and work together.

Peace,

Pastor Jack

**Mission Trip to South Dakota**

In July, 22 youth and adults traveled to Martin, SD for this summer's mission trip.

On Sunday August 9th during the 9am worship service mission trip participants will share their experiences with the congregation.

Please join them in support and celebration of their "Growing with Christ" adventure.

**Memory Verse**



This fall, the Session is planning to lease space to the ADVOCAP Head Start program. The space will be for two, 2-4 year old classrooms (off of the gathering room). The rooms will be used from September into June during the daytime. ADVOCAP will be paying us \$2,250 / month during the time they are using the rooms.

More importantly, however, this is an opportunity to expand our relationship with ADVOCAP. Currently, our Christmas Angel Tree gifts are given through ADVOCAP. We have also been distributing meals at Thanksgiving. This is a chance to expand our ministry to families that are in profound need of support. We are acting to follow our call to share the love of Christ with the children.

In order to accommodate Head Start, we will be replacing the wall between two classrooms (on the northwest side of the Gathering Room) with an accordion door. This will allow the rooms to be merged. The cost for this process will be approximately \$9,731. Head Start will be installing a fence for a play area adjacent to the back side of the building. We are signing a two year lease with ADVOCAP Head Start (pending approval by the Presbytery Finance Committee and by Winnebago Presbytery).

Proceeds from the lease will go into a new Capital Fund that Session has just established. The Capitol Fund will be dedicated to building maintenance and repair. We are excited for the opportunity to host this program and work together with these families in need.

If you have additional questions speak to Pastor Jack, Dave Weber or Jim Wolfe.

Pastor Jack  
Moderator of Session

**This Week @ Church**

- August 3 Staff Meeting  
Boy Scouts
- August 4 Christian Education  
AA Meeting
- August 5 Generosity Team  
Noon Prayer  
Table Tennis
- August 6 Organ Recital
- August 8 Tech Rehearsal  
PYA at Woodlands  
Castaways
- August 9 Worship  
Mission Trip Report
- August 10 Staff Meeting  
Loaves and Fishes  
Joint Meeting -  
CE, Creative Arts,  
Generosity, Worship  
Boys Scouts

**Organ Concert Series**

Concerts are presented free of charge, on Thursdays from 12:15 to 12:45. A free-will offering will be taken. The offering will help support the continuation of summer organ recitals. It will also go towards the development of programming, events and scholarships to encourage young people to become part of a new generation of organists.

Our own Kris Bartelt will performing on August 6!

Thursday schedule is as follows:

- Aug 6 **Kris Bartelt**  
**First Presbyterian Church**  
**1225 Fourth St. Rd.**
- Aug 13 Brent Erstad  
Church of Our Saviour  
363 S Main St.
- Aug 20 Ken Hill  
Hope Lutheran Church  
260 Vincent St.
- Aug 27 Organ Building Show & Tell  
Arpad Muranyi  
The former  
St. Patrick's Church

## Visioning Workshop Outcomes

After our three visioning workshops a summary was presented to Session at our last meeting (see below). The aim of the workshops was through interaction and through discussions to get to the core of how we share our relationship with Christ together. The aim of this process has been to discern our DNA of ministry, what runs through our common vision of community and relationship with Christ, so that we may minister out of these core traits. The outcome will be to focus our ministry, recognizing what is our unique call to serve Christ in Fond du Lac.

The points that have been developing as key elements of our community and focus that we desire to be a listening and compassionate people. We want to be engaged in ministry with others. We believe that people should develop their own personal relationship with Christ, and we like being in a community that has diversity of opinions and beliefs. One of the more surprising elements was the discovery that as a church we want to be challenged, to move out of our comfort zone and to “raise the bar” so that we may accomplish things that we feel are significant. In a time when there is a tendency to try and accommodate others, and to make things easier, what we are hearing is a desire for maturity, purpose, and significance to the things we do together.

The next step is that in August, Session will be reviewing our Mission Statement: “Christians, Growing Humbly in faith, reaching out in love” and deciding whether we want to continue to use this statement or if it needs to be replaced with one that better communicates these aims and goals. These materials will be central to our Generosity Campaign and

planning for the future. Thank you to all who participated in these workshops and made them an enjoyable and community building experience.

Pastor Jack

Summary:

Our Desire for Relationships in the Church is that We Be:

- Open, accepting, and listening – welcoming individuals and receiving them with appreciation and warmth;
- Loving, supportive, and compassionate – demonstrating care and concern through actions and through positive communication;
- Given purpose and direction through our individual and shared relationship with Christ.

Our goals as a Church are to be:

- Inviting, open and welcoming, embracing individuals (particularly who are hurting);
- Provide an atmosphere of reverence, experience of Christ's presence, and instruction;
- To create an atmosphere where people are able to develop their own personal faith in a diverse community with other people of strong faith.

Our Goals of Discipleship Are:

- To create strong Christians who demonstrate their knowledge of Christ through the ability to be respectful, compassionate, and engaged with the people around them;
- To create an atmosphere of healing, growth; and development of a strong personal faith in Christ;
- To make every Christian aware of her/his personal gifts for

serving Christ and to develop a focus on being active in using those gifts.

As We Serve Christ in the World:

- We want to be personally involved: to be challenged by our service and taken out of our “comfort zone;” to engage in relationships with those whom we are reaching out to in Christ's love;
- We want to share with others, not to be in a one way giving relationship;
- We want to be engaged with those who are using their gifts and abilities to make a difference, not just to give money.



## Geller Fund Donations

Outreach Team has been given the responsibility and blessing to use portions of the interest earned by the Clarice Geller fund in behalf of non-profit and charitable organizations.

Outreach Team met in May 2015 to consider the options available for international mission.

The following organizations were selected to receive donations from the Geller fund in 2015:

### [Presbyterian Disaster Assistance - \\$1,500](#)

This program operated by the Presbyterian Church USA provides relief from floods, fires, earthquakes, as well as war and refugee services throughout the world and in the USA.

### [Operation Smile - \\$500](#)

This is a medical services program providing surgery and treatment with a focus on cleft lip and cleft palate in developing countries. Our church has supported this medical mission in previous years as well.

### [Trinity South Sudan Ministry - \\$750](#)

This is the presbytery in South Carolina which has been providing a wide variety of mission and ministry to the people of South Sudan for several years.

### [Yei Teacher Training College - \\$250](#)

This is a college for the training of elementary and high school teachers in South Sudan.

### [Valentino Achak Deng Foundation - \\$250](#)

To support the Marial Bai Secondary School also in South Sudan.

Outreach team plans to meet again this year to consider local and domestic non-profit organizations for donations from the Geller fund interest. If you have knowledge of local or national organizations that are worthy of support, please notify any Outreach team member.

## Protecting Our Youth

You are invited to a presentation entitled "Protecting our Youth" with the focus on information for families and youth about Human Trafficking.

This free daylong conference will be held on Saturday, August 8 from 9:00 am to 4:15 pm at Community Church. Attendees are welcome to come for just part of the day, if you wish.

Survivor and author Theresa Flores will share her story of trafficking and slavery while living in an upper-middle class suburb of Detroit, Michigan.

There will be a Cyber Security presentation by the Fond du Lac Police Department focusing on internet safety and predatory signs and warnings.

The Just Fare Market Education Committee will also be making a presentation on Fair Trade as a means to prevent trafficking. Just Fare will also talk about Fair Trade's role in helping to reintegrate rescued victims back into freedom.

Community Church is responding to the scourge of sex and forced labor trafficking by organizing a work-group that is helping the church and community become informed FIRST and then involved, in standing against human trafficking.

For more information contact Carol Smith or check out the information posted on the Community Church website. <http://ccfdl.org/ministries/adult-ministries/exposing-human-trafficking/>.

## Back to School Fond du Lac

It is time again to start collecting money and school supplies to help families in our area provide their children with needed school supplies for the new school year.

Back to School Fond du Lac is a community wide collaboration of agencies, businesses, schools, churches and people like you, who come together every year to support this wonderful mission project. Last year 1200 students were helped by providing love, money and supplies, worth about \$70,000.

This was originally a church based mission. Area churches still provide a large portion of the supplies and money needed to support the mission. You can sign up online to help with many wonderful volunteering opportunities of Back to School on our Facebook page or call Deb Tauer at 920.426.0150.

There will be a collection box in our front entryway for donated supplies from now until August 17<sup>th</sup>. Please check the suggested supply list on the box and make checks of monetary donations out to First Presbyterian Church/Back to School. Thank you for your support. Questions contact Mike Petersen or Shin Ae Zeigler.



**First Presbyterian Church**  
Fond du Lac, WI

**Growing in Christ**

**Glorifying God  
Reaching Out in Love  
Opening Hearts  
Walking with Christ**

## Coming up in Worship

Sunday, August 2      Noah

Churchnic (Outdoor worship and picnic. Bring something to share.) Communion.

Sermon: "Washing Away the Corruption"

Theme: God brought an end to the era of extreme corruption while showing grace in the midst of disaster.

Purpose: The congregation will understand the story of Noah as a story of God's righteousness and human fallen nature; and will look at themselves as the recipients of grace and forgiveness.

Scriptures: Hebrews 8:6-13 A new covenant written on each person's heart  
Genesis 6:9-22, 9:8-17 Noah told to build the ark, the Covenant of the Rainbow.

Questions:

Why did God have to destroy humanity in order to end sin? What was the purpose of the flood? Why did God need Noah, couldn't God have done things without a human doing the "hard work?" Did it work? Does it appear that God has emotions and responses that we don't tend to see God as having today? Did God make mistakes in creating humanity in the way that they were created? What does this story say about judgment and grace? What does this story say about the accountability of humanity as opposed to the accountability of individuals? Are there sins of the whole of humanity as opposed to sins of individuals? What's the difference?

Sunday, August 9      Joseph, the Coat, and the Trip to Egypt.

Sermon: "What Was Intended for Harm Turned to Good."

Theme: God's works through the things that are wrong to bring about grace and healing.

Scriptures: Romans 8:26-30 All things work together for Good for those who are in Christ Jesus.  
Genesis 37: 1-8, 18-36; 45:4-8 Joseph dreams of his brother's submission to him; he is sold into slavery by his brothers.

Questions:

How do we understand when God turns something that was intended to do harm into something that is good? Does God intend that we experience suffering and hardship? Why is it that we grow most during times of pain and difficulty? How is it that when there is trouble and things are out of control, some people grow closer to God while other people become more alienated, hostile, and angry? What should our response be to the times when we experience oppression and attacks? How do we learn to develop the right attitude and spiritual practices so that when bad things happen, they bear fruit of the knowledge of God and wisdom?

Sunday, August 16      Jacob's Wrestling with the Angel

Sermon: "One Can Only Run So Far"

Theme: The story of Jacob and the Angel is the story of having to face one's own faults and experience God's steadfast love in the midst of our humanity.

Purpose: The congregation will understand that God's desire is not just that we participate in spiritual practices but that we live in healthy relationships as God intended.

Scriptures: 1 John 3:18-24 Let us love not just in words but in truth.  
Genesis 32:1-32 Jacob prepares to meet Esau, and wrestles all night with an "angel".

Questions:

What does it mean to wrestle with God? Jacob's wrestling began when he no longer could run away from his problems. How does wrestling with God differ from just fretting over our worries? How does wrestling with God's message lead to a change of life? In the wrestling match God "injured" Jacob by taking away his ability to run away. In what ways do we need our ability to run away eliminated in order that we may grow in faith and knowledge? How does wrestling with God move us from people who "love in word or speech" to becoming people who love in deed? How does wrestling with God become an important part of moving to a new and deeper level of living faithfully?

Preaching August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2015 Rev. Greg Smith

Preaching August 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015 Chaplain Darren Beachy

# August 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						<b>1</b> 8a-9a Men of Faith 9a-10a Tech Rehearsal 10a-11a Cong. Meeting Planning Team
<b>2</b> 9a-10a Outdoor Worship Service	<b>3</b> 10a-11:30a Staff 6p-7p Boy Scouts Committee 6:30p-8p Boy Scouts (Social Hall)	<b>4</b> 5p-7p Christian Education Team Meeting 6p-7p AA Meeting (Resource Room)	<b>5</b> 8a-9a Breakfast at Pump and Pantry (Pump and Pantry) 10:00a Generosity Team 12p-1p Prayer 6:30p-9:30p Table Tennis	<b>6</b> 12:15p-1:15p Organ Recital	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> 9a-4:15p Conference Regarding Human Trafficking (Community Church), N6717 Streblov Drive, Fond du Lac, WI 54937. 9a-10a Tech Rehearsal 10:45a-11:45a PYA at the Woodlands (The Woodlands, Fond du lac, WI)
<b>9</b> 9a-10a Worship	<b>10</b> 2:30p-4p Staff 4p-7p Loaves and Fishes (Church of Peace UCC, 158 South Military Road, Fond du Lac, WI 5) 6:30p-8p Joint CE, Worship, Generosity, and Creative Arts 6:30p-8p Boy Scouts (Social Hall) 6:30p-8p Outreach Team (Parlor)	<b>11</b> 6p-7p AA Meeting (Resource Room)	<b>12</b> 8a-9a Breakfast at Pump and Pantry (Pump and Pantry) 12p-1p Prayer 6:30p-7:30p Management Mtg (Gathering Room) 6:30p-9:30p Table Tennis	<b>13</b> 4p-6p Ruby's Pantry Open 6p-8p Women in Faith	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> 9a-10a Tech Rehearsal
<b>16</b> 9a-10a Worship 10:15a-11:15a Informational Congregational Meeting	<b>17</b> Deadline for Back to School Contributions 2:30p-4p Staff 6:30p-8p Boy Scouts (Social Hall) 6:30p-8p Session	<b>18</b> 6p-7p AA Meeting (Resource Room)	<b>19</b> 8a-9a Breakfast at Pump and Pantry (Pump and Pantry) 12p-1p Prayer 6:30p-9:30p Table Tennis	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> 7p-9p Cribbage	<b>22</b> 8a-2:30p Back to School Fond du Lac (Boys and Girls Club) 9a-10a Tech Rehearsal
<b>23</b> 9a-10a Worship	<b>24</b> 2:30p-4p Staff 6:30p-8p Boy Scouts (Social Hall)	<b>25</b> 6p-7p AA Meeting (Resource Room)	<b>26</b> 8a-9a Breakfast at Pump and Pantry (Pump and Pantry) 6:30p-9:30p Table Tennis	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> 9a-10a Tech Rehearsal
<b>30</b> 9a-10a Worship	<b>31</b> 2:30p-4p Staff 6:30p-8p Boy Scouts (Social Hall)	<b>Notes:</b>				